

THE WIFE.

That is to say, a Woman, Who is Married.

Do you see the woman?
I do see the woman.
Who is she?
She is the wife of the man with her.
Are all women wives?
They all want to be.
Why?
I give it up.
The Bible says something about it, doesn't it?
Yes, but since the Bible we have gone ahead.
How?
Education.
Isn't education a blessing if you have it?
That depends.
There is, then, education and education?
Most distinctively.
How long has this woman been married?
Ten years.
How old is she now?
Twenty-nine.
She was married at nineteen, then?
Yes, and her husband was twenty-three.
Is she happily married?
Oh, she seems to get along very comfortably with her husband.
They appear to be tired of each other.
No, not that; they are used to each other.
They don't talk much, do they?
They haven't anything to talk about.
Why not?
Well, she talks to her friends, and he talks to his; and they have gradually settled into the belief that husbands and wives do not have to talk to each other.
Is it that they are uncongenial?
She would not say so.
But they were devoted lovers?
Devoted.
Couldn't stay away from each other a minute?
Not unless they were perfectly miserable.
They had plenty to talk about then?
Not plenty in quantity, but in quality; the subject is one that stands an infinite amount of talking under favoring conditions.
Love, I presume?
Of course.
Why don't they talk it now?
They're married.
Don't married people talk love?
They say it is so silly.
Don't you suppose they thought of this when they were courting?
Hardly; courtship is not a time of thought for one's future beyond the wedding day.
People make mistakes in that, don't they?
Yes, indeed.
But this two were so young?
That's one of the mistakes.
Should she have waited?
At least five years. A woman can do a vast deal of beneficial thinking in five years at that period of her life.
Would she have thought while she waited?
The years compel it; for years bring experience, and experience is a school in which even fools must learn.
Don't people become set in their ways if they wait too long?
If they do, it is not nearly so bad as getting set in each other's ways, and going about together as one person, always lonely unless that person have company.
Some women have congenial husbands, haven't they?
Yes, but not as the result of a youthful marriage, prompted by a wild, tumultuous, absorbing, ineffable, unalterable love, such as summer novels are loaded with.
What do you expect them to have?
Just that.
Is there a remedy?
Yes, they should be sensible.
Would so many marry if they were?
No, but there would be happier, at least pleasanter, marriages. It isn't quantity so much as quality that we need in this business.
Shouldn't wives and husbands be lovers?
Better to be friends and companions.
Why?
Because lovers quarrel and are silly; they neglect forbearance, and depend upon forgiveness; they wound and count the healing as atonement; they act first and think afterward. Friends don't do that; they forbear so they need not forgive; they make no wounds to heal; they think before they act. In other words, they are rational beings.
But cold and unfeeling?
Not at all; for friendship is more enduring than love, as love is generally practiced.
Don't most women say they prefer to quarrel and make up?
Most women say a great many things they are sorry for.
Is marriage a failure?
Like every other human affair, it is if improperly managed.
And the women are the heavier losers?
Ninety-nine per cent. of them are.
Why?
Because they are women.
What are they going to do about it?
Nothing, I fancy. They are used to it.
Couldn't they do something?
Certainly, but not until they have uneducated themselves of the fallacy that a woman must marry, just because she thinks she is in love, and knows she could not exist two minutes without her dear one; or until she has unlearned that other fallacy that any husband is better than no husband.
Then being an old maid is not the worst thing in the world?
Ask this wife we are talking about and hear what she says.
And yet this is not an unhappy wife?
Certainly not; she has only learned that the realization is not what the romance was.
Is it ever so?

(Continued on Fourth Page.)

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